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Geographic Support Project

RECENT TOURIST MAPS OF THE EUROPEAN SATELLITES



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During the past 5 years, many maps intended primarily for tourists have been published in the Soviet Satellite countries of Europe. Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and East Germany have been active in the production of such maps. The Balkan Satellites -- Rumania, Bulgaria, and Albania -- have published too few to warrant discussion. The stepped-up release of tourist maps* to the public after a period when maps were generally withheld for security reasons, however, does not imply a more liberal policy regarding dissemination of cartographic information. Many of the tourist maps are of relatively large scale and the high quality of the printing and general layout helps to impart to them an authoritative air. Close examination of the maps, however, reveals that information of intelligence value has been cut to a minimum and that their attractive appearance belies their over-all quality. Nevertheless, as supplements to intelligence reports on the areas covered, these tourist maps are useful in spite of their limitations. They are unclassified, easily obtainable, and would be more innocuous than most other types of maps if found in the possession of a foreign traveler in a satellite country.

The many tourist maps that have been published in Poland since 1953 by the Państwowe Przedsiębiorstwo Wydawnictw Kartograficznych (PPWK; State Cartographic Publications Enterprise) are mainly of 5 types: (1) small-scale general maps covering major parts of the country, (2) regional and province maps (1:400,000),** (3) maps of recreation areas (1:20,000 to 1:150,000), (4) city-vicinity maps (1:100,000 to 1:300,000), and (5) city plans (1:20,000). All of Poland is covered by tourist maps of one type or another, and areas of particular interest to tourists are portrayed at several different scales. Map coverage is particularly abundant for the recreation areas of the Tatra Mountains and the Masurian Lake region. Recent maps include some place names and cultural data related to tourism that are not presented to equal advantage elsewhere -- for example, parks, spas, hotels, museums, historical landmarks, churches, ruins, and hiking trails -- but, beyond this, the intelligence value of the maps is slight. According to reports, many PPWK tourist maps were deliberately drawn off scale, and their extreme generalization has caused some dissatisfaction even within Poland.

In Czechoslovakia, tourist maps are published under the aegis of Ústřední Správa Geodesie a Kartografie (Central Administration of Geodesy and Cartography) and Správa Geodézie a Kartografie na Slovensku

* Maps of the types discussed may be obtained by consulting the CIA Map Library, extension 3793.

** Scales mentioned are typical rather than exact; and scale ranges are not necessarily inclusive.

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(Administration of Geodesy and Cartography in Slovakia); and in Hungary under the auspices of the Állami Földmérési és Térképészeti Hivatal (State Survey and Cartographic Office).^{*} In both countries the maps fall within two broad categories: regional maps and city plans. They range in scale from about 1:100,000 for selected tourist regions through 1:12,000 for city plans, but the scale is not indicated on some of the maps. Although the maps were published during the period from 1957 to 1960, the information presented may not be up to date. Coverage is spotty for both countries but the areas having the greatest tourist attraction -- primarily the mountains of Slovakia and the hills and mountains of Hungary -- have the best coverage. No available coverage includes a western boundary, except for coverage of a very small part of the Austria-Czechoslovakia border area near Bratislava; none of the tourist maps include areas along the USSR border.

The East German tourist maps are principally of 3 types: (1) a series of individual Kreis maps at 1:50,000, published by 3 of the 4 official regional survey offices and covering the southwestern portion of East Germany; (2) maps of relatively small areas of special interest to tourists, which are included in the Unser Kleines Wanderheft series published by VEB Bibliographisches Institut Leipzig; and (3) city plans, published mainly by DEWAG-Werbung, Berlin. East German regulations specify that maps put out for public sale may not show railway lines serving freight traffic exclusively, industrial and harbor tracks, overpasses and underpasses, contour lines, spot heights, trigonometric points, high-tension lines, towers, power stations, waterworks, dams, and signal stations. Similarly, city plans may not identify post offices, hospitals, barracks and lodgings of the People's Police, offices of the Ministry of State Security, and industrial plants. Presumably these prohibitions apply to all types of tourist maps, even though the maps may present other information in considerable detail.

None of the tourist maps published in the Soviet Satellite countries of Europe make good intelligence tools. Because of rigorous censorship, they have a dearth of location-fixing detail. Few, if any, of them carry geographic coordinates or identify triangulation points. Some are not drawn to scale and others omit an indication of the scale.

^{*} In many cases the sponsoring agencies do not do the actual compilation and printing. The Kartografický a Reprodukční ústav v Praze compiles and prints many of the tourist maps covering the Czech Lands, whereas the Kartografický a Reprodukční ústav v Modre-Harmónii is the compilation and printing organization responsible for many maps of Slovakia. In Hungary the Kartográfiai Vállalat is the principal organization compiling tourist maps.

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The maps include little economic data. Even known industrial sites, mine pits, and hydroelectric installations are not shown. For instance, some reservoirs resulting from dam construction along the Váh River in Czechoslovakia are depicted, but the dams themselves are not identified. Transportation features, both railroads and roads, are grossly generalized. Neither the number of tracks of a rail line nor the type of surface of a road can be determined from these maps. Known airfields are represented as blanks or are indistinguishable from the land-use pattern of the immediate vicinity. As exceptions to the general rule, a few areas are given in considerable detail. For example, maps of the Bükk Mountain region of Hungary show the road network within a fenced area northeast of Felnémet (47°56'N-20°22'E) and also a road and railroad leading to a built-up section southwest of Sajóházy (48°11'N-20°47'E). Topography and hydrography not only are generalized but also are compiled in most cases from pre-World War II topographic maps. Data on elevations in Czechoslovakia, for example, seem to have been taken from spot heights appearing on very old Austro-Hungarian maps at the scale of 1:75,000.

On most city plans the street patterns and built-up areas are generalized, but the treatment of detail varies considerably from country to country and from plan to plan. A recent city plan of Budapest, for instance, goes so far as to include the house numbering system, a feature not found on other plans.

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